

THE BEACON

A PAPER FOR THE SUNDAY SCHOOL
AND THE HOME

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HOLY NIGHT—FUERNSTEIN.

A Christmas Carol.

Everywhere, everywhere, Christmas to-night!

Christmas in lands of the fir tree and pine,
Christmas in lands of the palm tree and vine,

Christmas where snow-peaks stand solemn and white,

Christmas where corn-fields lie sunny and bright,

Everywhere, everywhere, Christmas to-night!

Christmas where children are hopeful and gay,

Christmas where old men are patient and gray,

Christmas where peace, like a dove in its flight,

Broods o'er brave men in the thick of the fight;

Everywhere, everywhere, Christmas to-night!

For the Christ child who comes is the Master of all,

No place too great and no cottage too small;

The angels who welcome him sing from the height,

"In the city of David, a King in his might."

Everywhere, everywhere, Christmas to-night!

Then let every heart keep its Christmas within,

Christ's pity for sorrow, Christ's hatred of sin,

Christ's care for the weakest, Christ's courage for right,

Christ's dread of the darkness, Christ's love of the light.

Everywhere, everywhere, Christmas to-night!

So the stars of the midnight which compass us round

Shall see a strange glory, and hear a sweet sound,

And cry, "Look! the earth is aflame with delight;

O sons of the morning, rejoice at the sight."

Everywhere, everywhere, Christmas to-night!

PHILLIPS BROOKS.

As the Magi came bearing gifts, so we do also,—gifts that relieve want, gifts that are sweet and fragrant with friendship; gifts that breathe love, gifts that mean service, gifts inspired still by the Star that shone over the city of David nearly two thousand years ago.

KATE DOUGLAS WIGGIN.

The heart is a garden, and never a seed
Dropped into its fertile mold,
But grows and grows, be it thistle or rose:
Weed or blossom, its leaves unfold.
Our thoughts are the seeds that grow to be
The plants that shall live through eternity.

MRS. THORPE.

For The Beacon.

Little Ready-Foot's Wonderful Christmas Stockings.

BY MARTHA BURR BANKS.

Once upon a time there was a little girl who was so loving, sweet-tempered, helpful, and obliging that, though her real name was Frieda, almost everybody in the village in which she lived called her "Little Ready-Foot."

Now Ready-Foot's father never had much money, and one winter it chanced that he had less than usual and could get few new things for his five small children. So when Christmas Eve came, Ready-Foot knew that he could buy them no Christmas gifts and goodies, and, as she was always on the run for somebody and had worn out all her stockings, she had nothing fit to hang up in the hope that it would be filled by good Santa Claus on his way through the town.

"Well, never mind," thought Ready-Foot, with a long, deep sigh, as she snuggled down into her little bed. "Every one of the children has a stocking that will hold something, and that's a comfort. There, I forgot to blow out my candle! But oh, oh, oh! What's that?"

Over the chimney there was a slight *whirr* of wings, and a soft glow that did not come from the candle began to steal into the bare little room. There was a crisp breath of air from somewhere and a gentle stir of sound, something like the crinkle of snow and ice, the rustling of dry oak leaves, and the trilling and twittering of bird-notes; and then from behind the fire-board, leaning against the small open fireplace, came creeping, creeping, all *a-tiptoe*, *a-tiptoe*, a band of the dearest little people that ever were seen.

They were all in frosty-white doublet and hose or short skirts and kirtles, and each of them wore, besides, a reddish-brown cape and cap and a belt and a pocket of woven brown grasses. In front of each cap was perked a sprig of evergreen and the tip of a barn-yard feather, red or blue or yellow, or black or brown or gray, held in position by a buckle formed of ice crystals; and each little man and woman carried a butternut lantern pierced with holes through which glinted the light of a glow-worm.

"They're fairies," thought Ready-Foot, her heart beating fast with happy excitement. "I'm sure they're fairies! And the sweetest, prettiest one of them all has a little sceptre made of an icicle, with a snowflake at one end of it, so she must be the fairy queen; and what a lovely locket she has on her neck! It looks like a flash of sunshine."

The little creatures flew to Ready-Foot's mantel, where they placed their lanterns in a row. Then the Queen fluttered down to a small cushioned chair by the fireplace and seated herself upon it as if it were a kind of throne, and her subjects flipped themselves from their perch and settled about her, in a wide half-circle, like a flock of alighting birds or a crowd of drifting snowflakes. The Queen waved her sceptre, or wand, once, twice, thrice! and the little folk turned

towards Ready-Foot and every fairy blew her a kiss. The next moment the company broke into a merry, musical melody with a bit of frosty tingle through it, and a tinkling of tiny silver bells:

Sprites of winter woods are we!
Friends of bird and bush and tree;
Mates of bunnies, squirrels, mice,
Through the time of snow and ice.
You're a comrade of our clan,
So we'll help you all we can.
Say no word; lie quiet, dear;
We've a Christmas for you here."

Ready-Foot smiled joyfully at the fairy troop and folded her hands under one cheek to wait for whatever might happen next. The fairy guests wheeled about and again faced the throne, and two active little fellows, each of whom bore a light burden on his back, stepped out from the fairy group, jerked off their caps, and ran to kneel at the feet of the Queen. She playfully touched each elf with her wand, and the fays arose and pulled their burdens around in front of them.

"Well, Balsam," cried the Queen in a clear, bird-like voice, "and you, jolly little Hollykin, what luck, good Balsam and Hollykin?"

"Why, Queen Crystal," piped the little sprite Balsam, "here are two old nests that the orioles will not use again, and they will serve well for Christmas stockings, methinks. Notice how strong they are by reason of the weaving into them of the yarn that Ready-Foot begged from Granny Greenleaf for the birds last spring."

"And, your Majesty," sputtered the other little chap, who seemed to be all merry eyes, rosy cheeks, and dancing dimples, "in these nests we have stowed away the things that we have gleaned for the making of our Christmas celebration. Now, if one man will hold one nest and another man the other, we will show you our treasures, your Majesty."

With a low bow bright little Balsam handed his nest to an elf at the right of the throne, and spry little Hollykin spun round on his toes once or twice and then presented his to an elf at the left. Then Balsam drew something from one of the oriole pockets, and again bent before the Queen.

"Your Majesty," he went on eagerly, "all the birds love Ready-Foot, you know, because she never forgets to feed them in the winter, and because, on account of her kindness to his animals, Farmer Meadows, for her sake, always allows the feathery folk to have some of his cherries and his corn. So to-day Willy Waxwing pointed out to Hollykin, Sparkle, Quickfinger, and me the little fir tree that Ready-Foot coaxed her father to plant hard by the cottage of Granny Greenleaf, that it might shield her from the wind in the cold season and shelter her from the hot sun in hot weather. And in sooth, your Majesty, good old Granny Greenleaf has blessed it with so many warm, happy thoughts that 'tis all alive with freshness and vigor, and sure am I that this twig that I plucked from it and brought hither will be just what we need for our present purpose."

Balsam whiffed himself to a corner of the room, and there laid his twig upon the floor. The Queen waved her wand slowly back and forth, once, twice, thrice! and, oh, most marvellous and unbelievable,—unless you believe in fairies,—the little branch shot out a stalk and the stalk began to grow upwards. Before long it began to send out on every side short, waving green arms, which spread and spread and spread, and at last there stood a complete little fir tree, straight and steady,

its head brushing the ceiling. The fairies swung their caps and shouted softly, "Hurrah!"

"It's perfectly beautiful!" thought Ready-Foot, rapturously. Queen Crystal smiled graciously around the fairy circle. "And what have you for us, Finchette?" she asked pleasantly.

A pretty little maid with a crimson feather in her cap danced out from the ring, curtsied in lowly fashion, and dangled two woven pockets in the air.

"Your Majesty," she answered blithely, "Bluebird and his cronies have fetched us honeysuckle berries, bay berries, and rosehips, and have granted us part of the store of wintergreen and partridge berries that we culled for them from the woods at the foot of Forlornity Lane. They are much bigger and brighter than most berries of the sort, for the comfort and cheer that Ready-Foot has carried to the woodcutter's family in the lane have brightened everything in that neighborhood. In one of these bags are the candles that we have made from the bayberries and in the other—See, your Majesty!"

Finchette smilingly tossed one bag to Balsam, and then wafted herself to the bed, turned the other bag upside down, shook it gently, and out fell a shower of berries, big, bright, beautiful berries! How they bounced and rolled about on Ready-Foot's patch-work quilt! You would never have believed that one mite of a bag could have held so many—unless you believed in fairies.

"And we have pine-needles and dried corn-silk in our pockets, and we can string your berries for you," called a bevy of the fairy folk. Hurry, scurry! A party of the little people romped away to the tree to decorate it with the tiny candles,—and there were many more of them than one would have thought could have come from the wee pocket,—and another crew of fairies tumbled themselves upon the bed, and in a trice nimble fingers were slipping the small globes upon the long threads of silk. On they went, a red berry and a blue, a red and a blue, until there was a heap of gayly-colored garlands on the bed beside the workers. Then *whiz, whirr!* They were snatched up, and gracefully looped from bough to bough of the tree. But there was Hollykin shaking a little can that he had taken from one nest.

"Your Majesty," he began, hastily, as if afraid that his smiles might trip up his words before they were out in safety, "here I have—what do you think? A whole canful of sunshine! One stormy day, when Hazel, Cherry-Cheek, Red-Top, and I were out together, we peeped into the kitchen here, where Ready-Foot was amusing her small brothers and sisters, and the old room was fairly flooded with the brilliant stuff! By and by Ready-foot opened a window so that she might scatter some crumbs over the snow for the birds, and some of it floated out to us. We scrawled our caps full and sealed it up in this can. Ho, Hazel of the brown feather! Where are you?"

"Here," responded a demure little lass as she curtsied to the Queen. "Your Majesty," she went on, shyly, "Quirlie Squirrel, Dick Chickadee, Billy Nuthatch, Ruby Kinglet, and other birds, have shared with us the nuts, acorns, and cones that Ready-Foot shared with them, and we have strung them upon horsehairs. Now watch, your Majesty!"

Hollykin set his can upon the floor and knelt beside it. Hazel handed him a nut,

and in two seconds he had dropped it into his blazing liquid and twitched it out again, and, lo! it had become a glistening silver ball! He took an acorn from Cherry-Cheek, popped it into his can, and out jumped a glistening golden bell! He plunged in a cone given him by Red-Top and out came a gorgeous red balloon! The other fairies whooped with joy, and, when the magic fluid had turned out a goodly number of the dazzling ornaments, they gladly seized them and soon made them fast to the tapering tips of the tree branches. Nobody who did not believe in fairies could have understood how there could be so many of them; but all Hazel's treasures were not used, either.

Out of the wonderful storehouses then Hazel and some of her comrades pulled a dozen glittering strands of gold and silver, which they threw at the Queen's feet. "They are smiles and sunbeams that we've picked up in those places in the village where Ready-Foot has recently been," explained Hazel.

"Some we came across in the streets, some in the cottages, some in the schoolhouse, and some in the woods," chimed a chorus of voices. The rest of the fairies let out another whoop and swooped down upon the shining mass, and in a minute more the radiant things were swinging and swaying from the arms of the evergreen. Next, Balsam brought forth from one nest a tiny jar of honey given him by the bees before they fell asleep for the winter.

"This honey came from the flowers in the garden in which Ready-Foot often worked with Miss Crusty last summer," said Balsam; "and her merry laugh, sweet looks, and pleasant words seemed to make it the richest and the most finely-flavored that was ever known to any tongue. I can turn it into candy, too, your Majesty. Come, pretty men all, your help!"

Speedily the little men whisked from their pockets their little bubble-pipes, dipped them into Balsam's jar, and began to blow honey bubbles. The little women gathered together all the woven bags of the fairies, and, as the honey drops were shaken from the pipes, they caught them in their caps and then stuffed them into their pockets. Then in the twinkling of a twinkle the candy-bags were hung upon the tree. Only fairies could have done so much with an elfin-sized jar of honey, Ready-Foot thought.

Just then Finchette showed the Queen a chestnut-shell box in which lay something round and bright on a bit of milkweed floss. "It's a tear of love and gratitude shed by Ready-Foot's mother in thinking of her dear little daughter," murmured Finchette. "Cherry-Cheek and I found it one day when we'd strolled into her kitchen for a chat with the cricket on the hearth."

The Queen smiled and gently breathed upon the crystal drop, and, behold! it sailed away to the tree and clung to the topmost spire, and there it glimmered and glimmered and grew and grew until it had changed into a beautiful glowing star. The fairies pulled off their caps and blew more kisses to Ready-Foot, who blushed like a wild rose, and waved her hand in return.

"And now for the stockings themselves," said the Queen.

"Here's a little doll that I moulded from a lump of clay brought me by Bob Robin, your Majesty," spoke up Balsam. "We've tinted its eyes with the color of Brother Blue Jay's wings, rubbed its cheeks with the paint used for Charlie Cardinal's crest, and made it a wig from cat-tail fluff."



Photograph by Mrs. Charles F. Hayden.

"And we've fashioned it a frock and a coat and a hood from the myrtle and the other green things dug for us from under the snow by Molly Cotton Tail," chirped Finchette, "and trimmed them with pussy willow down; and we made her some shoes from the bark of the white birch."

"And Red-Top and I have strung a necklace and netted a purse for Ready-Foot from the sunflower seed she raised for the birds," sang Hazel.

"And we've a frost-scape, painted by Jack Frost, for Ready-Foot's father," added Hollykin, "and a deserted vireo home for a work-basket for her mother, and a fungus pin-cushion for her sister Hilda, and a willow whistle for one brother, and a little birch-bark canoe for the other, and a seed-box rattle for the baby."

"Very good, good fairies," nodded the Queen. "Now, Balsam, hang the nest-stockings at the head of the child's bed, and, Hollykin, tuck my sunshine locket down into the bottom of one of them. It will buy a good many things for our little friend and her family."

What fun it was to look on at the cramming of those queer stockings! Into one of them went again the doll and the necklace and the purse, and the chinks and the crannies were all filled with berries and gilded nuts. Into the other were put the presents for the rest

of Ready-Foot's family. Ready-Foot beamed with delight over both of these stockings.

One by one the fairy visitors dropped upon Ready-Foot's pillow, touched her cheek with rose-leaf lips, took their lanterns from the mantel, poised themselves for a moment by the fireplace to smile a last farewell at their little comrade, and then, *whirl, whirl-r!* they vanished behind the fireboard and were off up the chimney into the Christmas night.

The next thing that Ready-Foot knew was that it was Christmas morning, and she was sitting up in bed, staring about her. No, she had not been dreaming last night. There was the little Christmas-tree in one corner of her room; but, yes, the berry chains were now strings of red and blue glass balls, the smiles and the sunbeams were changed into gold and silver tinsel, and the candy-bags were small sweet-grass baskets. Wonderingly Ready-Foot drew towards her one of the nests. Why, it wasn't a nest any longer! Oh, dear, no! It was a real little girl stocking! And the doll wasn't a clay baby, either. It was a charming little damsel with flaxen locks, and it wore a truly gown, a truly coat, and a truly hood, and they were all bordered with swansdown. And the beads in the necklace were turned into gold beads and the purse was a silk bag, and in place of the gilded nuts she found a fine large orange,

and instead of loose berries a big red apple. Best of all, away down in the toe of the stocking was a shining gold coin. And, would you believe it? The other nest was a real stocking, too, and the things in it were real things.

Pretty soon Ready-Foot's mother came into the room. "Why, child!" she exclaimed. "So the neighbors have been making a Christmas for you."

"Why, no, mother," laughed Ready-Foot, "it was the winter fairies who did all this for us. Oh, mother, do call the children to come here to see the Christmas the fairies brought us, and our wonderful Christmas stockings!"

A Christmas Entertainment.

BY LESTER HANNAH.

[Let each child have banner or flag representing the countries, or dress in costume.]

I. GERMANY.

Germany gives us the Christmas tree.
They tell of a little child
Who came to a poor man's cottage
Once when the night was wild.
The children cared for the stranger,
It was Christ! And he blessed the tree,—
"It shall bloom each year in remembrance,
Ye have done it unto Me."

II. AUSTRIA.

In Austria across the water,
When Christmas Eve comes round,
In every window through the land
A candle bright is found.
'Tis placed to guide the Christ Child
Whose little feet draw near
To bless the children watching
This glad night of the year.

III. HOLLAND.

If I had been born in Holland,
My stockings I'd never choose,
But ready for good old Santa Claus
I'd place my two wooden shoes.

IV. FRANCE.

In sunny France a child in white
With a basket of toys on Christmas night
Goes to each door with presents for all,
The children good, both great and small.
Just after her comes—whom can it be?—
With a bundle of switches, don't you see?
Those for the children who are "bad,"
Don't you know they are sorry and sad?

V. NORWAY.

A quaint and beautiful custom
They tell us of far Norway.
There all the cattle and all the birds
Can keep the Christmas day.
The cattle have dinners they like the best,
And every farmer takes pains
On housetops and barns, for hungry birds,
To place the choicest grains.

VI. SPAIN.

In Spain they have mirth and feasting—
With cheer the whole land rings;
They celebrate with pomp each year
The festival of The Three Kings.
They form a long procession
And march through every street,
And give a Christmas greeting
To every one they meet.

VII. RUSSIA.

I sing of cold, cold Russia,
And how the children each year
Place bundles of hay by the fireside
To feed Kris Kringle's reindeer.

VIII. ENGLAND.

Mother England, dear old England,
How keeps she Christmas-tide?
With wassail bowl and wild boar's head
And the Yule log brought with pride;
And under the windows the carols are sung,
The churches are decked with green,
And slyly twining the chandelier
The mistletoe is seen.

IX. AMERICA.

Last of the list of Nations,
No legend have I like the rest,
But I gather from every country
The customs that suit me best.
No wonder my Christmas is merry,
And the land is filled with glee,
For every Nation under the sun
Has given a share to me!

The Normal Instructor.

For The Beacon.

The Christmas Lamp.

BY FLORA HUNTLEY.

It was the Friday before Christmas, and the students were unusually reluctant to come to order. In the shop, boys were putting finishing touches on boxes and clocks and other articles designed for Christmas presents, while Ned Blake carefully printed a card and attached it to a beautiful, hand-made electric lamp.

It had been a labor of love suggested by their instructor when the boys were trying to think of an appropriate present for the principal. They had contributed the necessary money, and Mr. Lawrence had made the more difficult metal work. Now everything was ready.

"Know your speech all right?" questioned the boys. "Don't fall down on it now."

"I'm all right," answered Blake.

"Good morning, boys," cried a man's jolly voice, and all looked up to greet Professor Lawrence and to crowd around him for advice on a last bit of carving or lettering.

"Now boys," began Mr. Lawrence, "I've asked Professor Raymond to come down at once, as soon as classes pass. He doesn't mistrust a thing. I told him I had a boy here that I wanted him to see. So act your parts well."

"Bet we will!" came from half a dozen.

"Watch me now," said Blake, striking an attitude and reciting: "'The members of the Freshman'"—but here the warning bell rang and all rushed away to their roll-rooms.

When the classes passed at five minutes after nine, forty boys hurried down to the carpenter's shop, eager and excited. Everything was in readiness. Ned Blake stood near the desk whispering over his speech. His eyes were fixed on the door.

"He said he'd come down," explained Mr. Lawrence, "but I believe I'll send one of you up for him. Will you go, Frank? Tell him Mr. Lawrence would like to have him come immediately. There's a boy here that he must see."

Frank was gone like a shot, mounting the

steps two at a time. "I've got to see Professor Raymond," he gasped, rushing into the office and addressing the clerk; then without waiting for permission he dashed into the Principal's private office.

"Mr. Lawrence wants you to come down to the shop right off," exclaimed Frank. "He wants you to see a boy!"

Professor Raymond looked up. A frown darkened his eyes. The whole week he had interviewed parents and disciplined students, and now on the last day of the term, on the very eve of Christmas, he was summoned to a most refractory case.

"I'll be down at once," he said quietly.

Frank reached the basement at a bound, and a moment later the Principal entered. He saw a roomful of boys each seemingly busy at his place at his bench. Professor Lawrence was at his desk, and near him stood Ned Blake, with downcast eyes.

"Which is the boy?" asked the Principal.

"There he is," indicating Ned.

"Well, what has he been doing?"

"Doing? Why, he's doing something all the time!"

"I haven't done any more than the rest"—began Ned.

"Now, now," interrupted the Principal, sternly, "I do not want you to talk like that. I am not considering the others; just now it is you. What have you to say?"

Ned Blake raised his head proudly and met the stern glance. He did not look like a culprit.

"Professor Raymond," he said simply, "the Freshman boys of the Manual Training Department realize that your interest and your encouragement have been an inspiration, and they wish at this time to make some expression of their gratitude. With the help of Professor Lawrence we have made this gift, which we hope will be of real service to you. In behalf of this class I present you this lamp. May it shed light on your tasks and illumine all your pleasures."

The boys broke into a quick cheer, which was instantly hushed as they waited for the response.

The sensitive face of the Principal had reflected a variety of emotion, as its sad severity changed to surprised comprehension, relief, gratitude, and an impulsive outgoing affection. He was the culprit now.

He looked up and smiled with the little twitch of the lips which every boy knew and loved. He cleared his throat and seemed about to speak, but no word came from the tightened lips. Then he turned and took up the gift they had made, and looked at it lovingly.

"It is a beautiful lamp, boys," he said, "but I—you have the advantage of me. I cannot make such speeches as Ned, here. But the light which you have given me to-day will help me to see many things which I have perhaps overlooked. I prize it very much. As for Blake, I trust he may keep his reputation of 'always doing something,' and I shall inflict only this penalty, that he carry the lamp to my office."

The boys cheered and grasped his outstretched hand, they congratulated Professor Lawrence, punched each other good-naturedly, and slapped Ned on the back as they cried with a parting cheer:

"Merry Christmas, Professor Raymond."

Better love the meanest thing on earth than love only yourself.

THOMAS NELSON PAGE.

For The Beacon.

Special Delivery.

BY HARRIET NUTTY.

"Surely the children can have a Christmas tree, John, even if we have to save in other ways," said Mrs. Lewis to her husband, about a week before Christmas.

"I don't know's they can. We've got to pay the grocer's bill, and I owe for that lumber yet, and we need coal. There won't be much carpentering work for a while, after this job's done."

"It's too bad, John, dear, and I do try to save."

"I know you do, Liza, I'm not blaming you. You see we haven't paid the doctor anything for so long that I'm ashamed to look him in the face; not but he'd come quick enough if he never got a cent. If Tom only hadn't broken his arm!"—and then Mr. Lewis went upstairs.

Tom came into the room, his arm in a sling. "Mother," he said, "dad says the kids can't have a tree, and it's all my fault,—about the doctor's bill,—an'—"

"Why, no, Tom, your father didn't mean that."

"Well, he's never forgiven me for being at the ball game that day when he'd sent me up about that lumber: I did the errand first."

"You did? Why didn't you tell your father, dear?"

"Dad was so mad he wouldn't let me explain, and then I got mad and wouldn't try any more. A broken arm isn't much fun. But, mother, if the kids can't have a Christmas tree, my name's not Tom Lewis."

Next morning Tom left home an hour earlier than usual. He had lain awake a long time, wondering how he could earn a little money before Christmas, and he made up his mind to go and see Mr. Mills, the village grocer. Mr. Mills liked Tom; and he was always one of the first to make excuses for any of the boys who might be in disgrace; he never forgot that he had once been a boy.

"Well, sonny, what's up? Mother want some goods this morning?"

"No, Mr. Mills, I came to see you about myself: I want your advice."

"Well, well, well!" Mr. Mills put on his spectacles, and looked very wise. "We'll go back inside. If any one wants to see me, Bill," he said to his clerk, "just say I'm engaged."

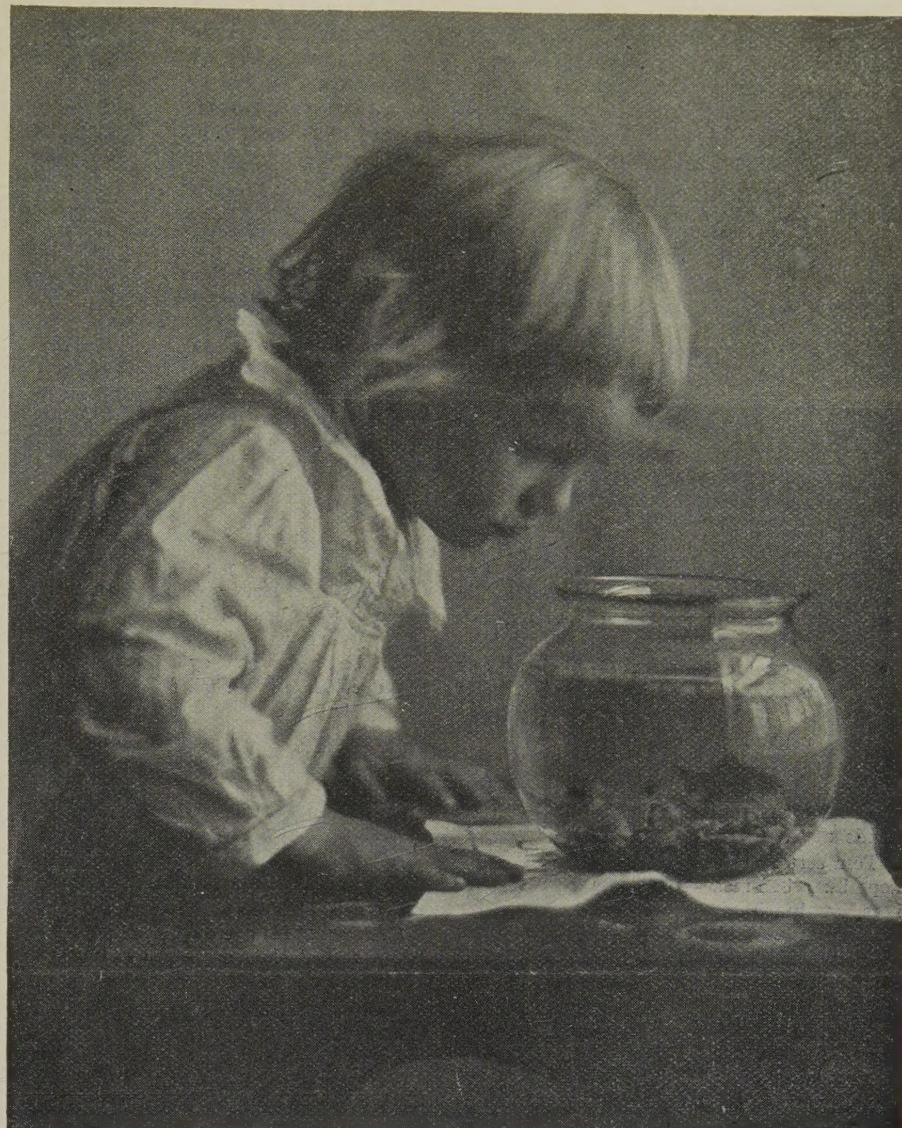
Tom hardly knew how to begin. His face was very red, but he plunged boldly in. "Mr. Mills, I've got to have some money before Christmas, and I don't know how to earn it."

"Well, well, well!" Mr. Mills had a way of rubbing his hands together, and saying, "Well, well, well!" It didn't seem to mean anything in particular, but it made a person feel better. "Lots of folks rowing in the same boat with you, Tom, know that?"

"Yes, sir, I s'pose so; but you see it's like this: dad says he may be laid off soon, an' we're in debt some, and there's the doctor,—and"—

"My boy, if your father and mother owe anything, the folks they owe are just as dead sure they'll get paid up as I'm sure that Christmas is coming."

"An' I want to earn enough to get a tree for the kids, an' a little more, too. I can do a lot with my left arm, you know. But I don't mean to hold somebody's horse



SOME "SANTA CLAUS" GOLDFISH.

a minute, an' have him throw me a quarter for it."

"You mean you want to earn the money fair and square, not's if you were six years old. Well, well, well: let me see."

Mr. Mills thought very hard for a few moments. Then he looked up with a start. Tom felt as if he had found a five-dollar bill. "I have it! Mrs. Smith—rich Mrs. Smith, I mean—was in here yesterday, and she said she wished we had a district messenger service, or special delivery, or something for Christmas bundles, you know. Guess she sends a lot of things away. Come to think of it, other people have said the same thing to me, only I didn't pay much attention. Tell you what, I'll start an agency, and you'll act for me. You report to me after school. Well, well, well!"

And Tom very gladly reported soon after three. Mr. Mills sent him to several of the leading people in the village,—Mrs. Smith, Mrs. Ferguson, Mrs. Green, Miss Clark, and others. All had packages to be mailed or sent by express, and every one was in a hurry, and Tom's coming was the greatest service to them.

"Why, Tom Lewis," exclaimed Mrs. Smith, "how you've grown! Twelve, are you? Broke your arm, didn't you? You're acting for Mr. Mills. Can you come every

day? And Christmas Eve will you go to a lot of houses in town for me? My, this is what I've always wanted about holiday time!"

"This is a great idea of Mr. Mills: I'm too glad for anything," Miss Clark said. "Special delivery for holiday bundles! Don't break the other arm, Tom."

They all made Tom feel that he was doing them a great favor, and so indeed he was.

"Hullo, Tom!" was Mr. Mills' greeting when the boy went back to the store: "this branch of the business is bringing me in extra money. Two parties paid their November bills to-day,—I believe just because I'm accommodating them by the special delivery,—fact. They wouldn't have paid till February."

"O Mr. Mills, you are just fine: I'd do anything in the world for you!"

"Tut, tut, tut, now don't you want me to lend you three or four dollars, so's to get things ready in time?"

"Three or four dollars? I'll never earn that much before Christmas, will I?"

"Well, as near's I can make out, you've made about a dollar forty so far; looks to me you'll make more than ten dollars by Christmas Eve. Tell your mother she'd better come around to-morrow, and pick out a tree."

When Tom rushed into the house, near seven o'clock, dinner was on the table. His father asked him what made him so late.

"I did some errands for Mr. Mills, dad."

"Won't we have a Christmas tree, mamma? won't we, dad?" cried Willie and Mamie. And little Harry, who did not know what a Christmas tree was, laughed and crowed, and could hardly eat any dinner.

"Mother," whispered Tom, "tell them yes, and I'll tell you what I mean after dinner."

So Mrs. Lewis told the children she thought Santa Claus would bring them a tree if they'd be good. Of course they promised to be very, very good. Tom explained to his mother afterwards, and she was very much surprised when he gave her the money. It was harder to explain to his father; but, when Mr. Lewis understood that it was a business arrangement, he said he supposed it was all right. "But don't get anything you can't pay for," he said.

The next day Mrs. Lewis ordered the tree, a good-sized one, and it was to be delivered the day before Christmas. "That boy of yours," said Mr. Mills, "is going to amount to something. I always told Lewis he had some go in him; there's nothing mean about him, and he's all the better for getting into a scrape once in a while. No, Mrs. Lewis, don't be afraid; whatever he gets this week he earns; it's a business arrangement, and he'll have his hands chuck full."

Tom certainly had all he could do: he was kept busy before school began in the mornings, at lunch time, and every afternoon and evening. On the day before Christmas he delivered dozens of packages, large and small, for Mrs. Smith, Miss Clark, and others. He had time, however, to buy little presents for the children, a pair of warm gloves for his father, and a book for his mother, one he had heard her say she would like to read.

In the evening, when the little ones were in bed, and dreaming of Santa Claus, Tom helped his mother and father dress the tree. "I could do better if I hadn't broken my arm," he said, climbing up a ladder; but his mother told him he couldn't do better if he had three arms.

The bell rang sharply, and Mr. Lewis opened the door. It was Dr. Camp. "Merry Christmas!" he said, shaking hands all around. "Lewis, I believe you asked me for my bill, and I thought this would be a good time to bring it around." He spread it out on the table.

"What does this mean, doctor?" asked Mr. Lewis, "this bill is receipted."

"It means that I won't take one cent for attending that lad's arm. I've just heard that Tom had his arm broken because he caught hold of my little Joe, to protect him from a rough-and-tumble lot of players that day on the field. I don't know why Joe was there, but I heard it from Mr. Mills, and he says he didn't know it until to-day. Next time, Tom," the doctor went on, putting his hand on the boy's head, "I hope you'll be in the game, and not on the outside."

"I don't know much what happened, doctor, but I guess my arm will soon be all right again," began Tom, but the bell rang once more: this time it was Mr. Mills. The doctor had to hurry away, but he told Tom he'd try to thank him better some other time. "Merry Christmas all around!" he cried, and was gone.

"I found I had made a mistake, Tom," said Mr. Mills. "I owe you a dollar more."

"How much does that make altogether, Tom?" asked his father.

"Fifteen dollars and ten cents," laughed happy Tom: "not so bad for a feller with a broken arm, is it, dad?"

"Grampas."

My grampa, when it's Chris'mas, he Comes to our house the day before, An' Chris'mas morn' him an' me Gets all my toys down on th' floor. An' he winds up my engine men An' makes my train go 'round the track, An' he 'ps me march my soldier men, And shows me 'bout my jumping-jack; An' ever'thing I say I know 'Bout Santa Claus he says it's so.

My grampa he don't ever care How much I rumple up his clo'es Or muss his whiskers or his hair— He says 'at such things only shows 'At boys is boys, an' has to play An' be as glad as they can be— An' ever' time it's Chris'mas day, W'y, he comes here to play with me; An' ma, one time, she kind o' smiled, An' said, "Which one o' you's the child?"

My grampa always understands Just what I mean an' how I feel When I don't want to wash my hands Before I sit down to a meal. An' ma, she laughs at him an' says, "A man of his age ought to know 'Bout raisin' children"—anyways, He really mustn't spoil me so. An' once I ast her, when he's gone, "Is grampas boys with whiskers on?"
WILBUR D. NESBIT, in *Harper's Magazine*.

For The Beacon.

"The Christmas Spirit."

BY MARGARET CLAYRE.

Myriads of lights gleamed on throngs of happy shoppers coming and going by the holly-trimmed windows, hurrying in and out of the whirling glass doors.

Holiday happiness was in the air.

Near the window of a famous toy store stood two children of the tenements. Their thin garments fluttered in the stiff breeze, but their eyes glowed with pleasure and childish anticipation.

"I like de window bes'!" lisped little Amo. "I love dese shiny t'ings!"

"Yes, but I love to look at the people!" said Agnes, who was older and taller. "Ain't they grand, though! Look, Amo, see them fine ladies! My, ain't that one lovely!"

She pointed to a sweet-faced woman dressed in costly furs.

"Listen!" whispered Agnes, pulling Amo to the shoppers. "They're real rich folks! I like to hear 'em talk."

The boy looked wistfully at the pretty window, but, though the girl was not his sister, obeyed her.

"I love this happy crowd!" the older woman was saying.

"So do I!" said the other. "Every one is thinking of some one else! The Christmas Spirit is everywhere!"

As they started away, a package of tree ornaments dropped to the sidewalk, and, as

the woman stooped for it, a beautiful silver star slipped out and rolled perilously near to the passing feet.

Like a flash little Amo dashed after the star.

Agnes sped after him, easily left him behind, snatched up the prize, and held it toward its owner.

"You may keep it," said the hurrying woman, with a pleasant smile.

Agnes tucked the star beneath her blouse.

"Oh!" moaned the boy. "I t'ought it was mine!"

"It's no good, anyway!" said the girl. "Come on home!"

Amo followed close to her heels, as she led the way from the brilliant shopping district, through the side streets, to the squalid alley where they lived.

"Did you hear what that lovely lady said?" asked Agnes, when they paused on the broken steps. "She said the Christmas Spirit is everywhere! I wonder what it is, Don't you wish you could see it?"

"No!" blurted Amo. "I want my star!"

And suddenly he raised his tiny arms, and struck Agnes two sharp blows.

The girl turned on him with all the animal fierceness of a child who has long been forced to protect itself. One violent push—and little Amo lay moaning on the stones below.

Agnes gave him a quick glance, then fled to the stuffy rooms across the hall.

In the morning they told her that Amo lay in bed suffering with an injured leg, and that he must not walk for several days.

"Did he tell how he got hurt?" Agnes questioned.

"No," answered her mother, "he only said he fell off the steps."

"Huh!" grunted the girl, puzzled by Amo's silence. Then, half to herself: "Well, I don't care! He struck me hard!"

Cherishing childish hatred, Agnes turned to her broken dolls, and tried to amuse herself.

It was a hard task. She was tired of the dolls. She missed little Amo, and but for a raging storm she would have gone out to roam the streets.

"Why not go in to see Amo?" said her mother. "I'll go see if he's able."

"I don't want to see him," snapped Agnes, as her mother started up the stairs.

"And he don't want to see you!" said the mother, when she came back. "He said, 'No, no, I don't want her!' And he kept sayin' somethin' 'bout a star. Guess his leg makes him cross. Poor little feller!"

Agnes chuckled. She took the silver star from the pocket of her blouse, fastened it in her hair, curled up on the old sofa, and gazed out at the swirling snow.

She was thinking of all the lovely things she and Amo had seen the night before, and of the sweet-faced ladies who had smiled at her. She even recalled some of the things she had heard them say.

"Mother, what is the Christmas Spirit?" Agnes queried.

"Nothin' you can understand."

"Do you think I will see it to-morrow?"

"No, you silly child!"

The mother spoke sharply, for she was vexed and tired.

Agnes lay back and continued to dream.

"The Christmas Spirit, the Christmas Spirit," she kept thinking. "I wonder what it is. They say it is everywhere. If it is, why shan't I see it to-morrow? To-morrow is Christmas."

But Christmas Day itself brought little happiness. Agnes was glad when bed-time came.

"There ain't any Christmas Spirit!" she sobbed. "I've waited all day for it!"

She began to think of the sweet-faced ladies again, and this time she could remember all they said.

"Every one is thinking of some one else! The Christmas Spirit is everywhere!"

Agnes repeated the words many times. Little by little her mind grasped something of their meaning.

She slipped from her bed, tiptoed across the hall, and up the stairs.

At Amo's door she paused. He was sleeping soundly.

She quietly crossed to the bedside, took something from her night-gown pocket, and laid it in the boy's dark hand.

He opened his eyes, and smiled.

"Oh, Aggie, I dreamed about my pretty star," he murmured, clasping the soiled trinket, "and, look, here it is! Did the Christmas Spirit bring it?"

"Yes," said Agnes. And she stooped and kissed his cheek.

Signs of the Times.

Smiles on the faces as people go past, Squeaks in the snow where they hurry so fast; Meetings and greetings, so merry and glad, Wishings and winkings—"all Santa Claus mad";

Laughter that bubbles, and dancing wee feet; Holly wreaths hung all the way down the street;

See the green Christmas trees, frostily pearled; Christmas is coming, there's joy in the world!

Loving hands busy by day and by night; Loving hearts beating, all buoyant and light; Secrets and whispers and mystery rife, Doors that dare close e'en between man and wife;

Parcels and packages, bundle and box. Can't some one hurry these stupid old clocks? Santa Claus waits on his trip to be whirled, Christmas is coming, there's joy in the world!

GLADYS HYATT SINCLAIR, in *St. Nicholas*.

Christmas Eve in the West End of Boston.

Christmas Eve has always been a sacred time, especially among the Germans and Scandinavians and kindred peoples.

For weeks every one has been looking forward to Christmas, that greatest festival of church and home, the birthday of the Christ; and now it is Christmas Eve. A hush has fallen upon the busy, noisy world. A spirit of peace and good-will has taken possession of men's souls, and they pause for an hour in the hurry of life, as though expecting some unusual event. On this night, surely, no evil spirits dare stir abroad, so hallowed and so gracious is the time. This is indeed the "Holy Night," when the angel's song may once again be heard and heaven descend to earth.

Listen to the Christmas "waits" singing carols from door to door:—

"Lordings, listen to our lay:
We have come from far away
To seek Christmas;
In this mansion we are told
He his yearly feast doth hold:
'Tis to-day!
May joy come from God above
To all those who Christmas love."

See the lights in church and home! These are the Christmas candles, shining for the Christ Child. Will he visit you and me?

"Little taper, spread thy ray,
Make his pathway light as day;
Let some door be open wide
For the guest of Christmas-tide,
Dearer than all else beside.

"Little Christ Child, come to me,
Let my heart thy shelter be;
Such a home thou wilt not scorn.
So the bells on Christmas morn
Glad shall ring, 'A Christ is born.'"

On Christmas Eve, 1894, candles were lighted and placed in the windows of a certain house on West Cedar Street, after reading to the children the above verses and a story, "The Christ-candle," by Miss Kate L. Brown. These were the first candles on that street, and, with one exception, the first in that neighborhood. The next year an opposite neighbor did the same, and a few others later. Then suddenly, or so it seemed, the whole neighborhood was a blaze of glory, with hundreds of candles in scores of houses; and many voices were heard singing, "Noel, Noel," "God rest ye, merry gentlemen," or "What means this glory round our feet?"

Here was a group of singers from Chestnut Street, the Chestnut Street Christmas Association, and there the choir boys of the Church of the Advent; and again a band of young people from the Church of the Disciples, all of them twentieth-century "Christmas Waits." No wonder the neighbors turned out in force to enjoy the wonderful sight, to listen to the carols, to greet one another, and thus to welcome the spirit of Christmas Eve.

Was it not a happy suggestion that led to this neighborhood revival of the old-time customs, to the end "that the hearts of passers-by may be gladdened, and that the Day of Good Will and Glad Tidings may be fittingly commemorated"?

C. R. E.

Jesus and the Clay Birds.

A Swedish authoress, Miss Lagerlöf, has gathered from the lore of the peasants of that country a collection of legends about Jesus. These have no value as history, but are so beautiful that they deserve a place among the stories told at this Christmas time. The following legend is reprinted from the *Christian Register*:

One bright afternoon, when Jesus was five years old, he was sitting before his father's workshop in Nazareth, occupied in moulding cuckoo birds out of a lump of clay. Upon the steps of the adjoining house sat a little fellow named Judas, conspicuous for his red hair and ragged clothes, who also was playing with a lump of clay which Jesus had shared with him. Around each child was ranged a circle of odd figures,—clay cuckoo birds they were, with huge, knobby feet and even more knoblike wings and heads. Jesus' cuckoos, owing to his care and gentleness, were quite able to stand on their two feet, although one could hardly expect them to be able to fly. But Judas' cuckoos wobbled and tipped in a very funny manner indeed.

The more successful Jesus found himself in this toy creation, the happier he became. He thought each newly made bird the

prettiest of all. He meant that they should be his comrades at play, at meals, and should go to bed with him. They should teach him their songs also, and he would never be lonely again, even if Mother Mary were away from home. All of this he prattled to a water-carrier who was passing and who was rather amazed to learn that each of the birds could sing, had a name, and had come from Sheba to visit him.

"But see, also," cried Jesus, "what pretty cuckoos Judas makes!"

Now the setting sun began to cast a flood of golden light along the village street and turned into liquid gold the pools of water around the well. Suddenly an idea came to Jesus. He stretched out his hand and dipped up the water, and, lo! his chubby palm held many drops of captured sunlight, and with it he painted the dull gray cuckoos a glorious golden. In his joy he cried out to Judas to come and see. When Judas came, he fell to envying Jesus the pretty creations, and not one syllable of admiration escaped him. But, nevertheless, he, too, bent down to dip up some golden liquid, that he might so adorn his own birds. In vain!—the sunlight would not stay in his palm. He grew very angry.

"But, Judas," exclaimed Jesus, "I'll paint your cuckoos for you."

"You leave mine alone," cried Judas. "They are better than yours as they are."

Nevertheless, he suddenly stamped his foot down upon the whole flock of his birdies, and ruined every one. Then without a word he commenced to destroy those of Jesus.

"Judas," pleaded Jesus, "what are you doing? You have killed my bird."

Judas laughed and crushed another with his foot.

Jesus looked about for assistance. He was far too weak to prevent Judas, and Mother Mary was quite far away. Before he could find any one, Judas would have killed all his pets. He was in despair, for there were only three cuckoos left. Why didn't his cuckoos see their danger and fly away?

"Fly, fly, birdies!" cried Jesus, quite in tears, and clapped his little hands together to frighten them further.

Immediately the odd clay figures began to move their wings, and, one by one, they sprang into the air and flew away.

How crestfallen was Judas! He stood quite ashamed before Jesus; but, when Mother Mary came up and heard the whole story, she took him in her arms and caressed him.

"You poor child," she said, "you tried to do what no other mortal can do,—to rival him who sees song and life in the dullest clay and who paints with the golden sunlight."

O Christmas Tree.

O Christmas tree! O Christmas tree!
What will you bear this year for me?
Amid your candles' sparkling sheen,
Upon your spicy branches green,
Already your delights I see,
O Christmas tree! O Christmas tree!

O Christmas tree! O Christmas tree!
What shall your Christmas meaning be?
That all the world shall glow and shine,
With just such little lights as mine;
That warm to other hearts I'll be,
O Christmas tree! O Christmas tree.

MARY BAILEY.

For The Beacon.

The Deaf Mute's Gift.

BY CHARLES W. CASSON.

Once upon a time there was a man who wanted very much to help his fellow-men. He wished to do something that would make them happier and better. His great desire was to give, just as ours is at this Christmas time.

But this man found it much harder to do so than most of us. The ways in which others are able to help were impossible for him. He was in such a position that it was very difficult for him to give.

For one thing, he was poor. Most of us are able to give money. It is the easiest way to help. But this man was so poor that he did not have a dime to spare. It took every cent he had to buy the food he needed for himself.

Those who are able to give money are able to give comfort by speaking kind words. Often it does much more good than money. It always helps a great deal. But this man was not able to even speak a kind word to the person who needed it. He was a mute.

And even had he been able to speak, he was not able to hear the call for help and kindness. He was not only a mute, he was deaf as well. So he lived in a silent, voiceless world that you and I know nothing about, not able to hear, or speak, or give.

But always love finds a way to accomplish its purpose. Whenever any one really wants to help, there is some way by which that help can be given. No person is so feeble or so weak that he cannot do some good to his fellow-men.

And the deaf mute found a way. As he walked along the roads near his home, he carefully watched for all the loose stones upon them, and removed each one. By doing this he knew he was making smoother the roads along which people walked or drove, and so saved them many jolts and jars. And many people, walking along at night, no longer stumbled on the stones that used to hurt their feet.

Many years the deaf mute did this work, always glad in knowing that every stone he removed made the road easier for the people he loved to help. At last, however, one day while he was stooping down to pick up a stone, a runaway team came rushing along and ran over him, and his work and his life were both done.

Now, many people have done great and good things for their fellow-men. They have written books that were true, they have done deeds that were noble, they have lived lives that were splendid. But no person, however noted he might have become, ever did more or gave more to his fellow-men than did the old deaf mute who just picked the loose stones from off the roads near by. That was his gift to the world he wished to help.

All of us wish to help, too. There is not a boy or a girl that reads this copy of *The Beacon* who does not wish to do something for somebody. The Christmas air is just full of that desire. Why, Christmas would not be Christmas if it were otherwise. This is the time of loving and giving and helping.

But many of us feel that we are not able to do very much to help any one. We have little money to spend on others, and, while we are not dumb, we are not old enough to say what would be likely to comfort or help people. Very few of us are old enough to be

ministers. Perhaps the writer is the only one.

But there is always a way in which we can be of real help to some one. There are always loose stones upon the road. There are always little things that may be done to make people's lives happier. There are always chances for the littlest of us to help the biggest of us. Let us not despise the small deed of service or kindness, but do it in faith and love.

The Christmas Prayer.

Ancient feuds are all forgiven,
Prayers united rise to heaven
When we wear the Christmas chains.
Love makes every man a brother,
And we lean upon each other
When the Star of Bethlehem reigns.

SUSIE M. BEST.

She Danced with Her Feet.

One of the prettiest legends about Mary, the mother of Jesus, is to the effect that, when she was three years old, the high priest "placed her upon the third step of the altar, and the Lord gave unto her grace, and she danced with her feet, and all the house of Israel loved her."

This story is told in a very old book, one of the so-called Apocryphal Gospels, known as the Protevangelion. The book contains many curious stories, most of them impossible to believe and some of them such as we are very glad not to believe. But this scene is one that may have been really enacted. What a beautiful picture it would make if some artist would paint it! Imagine the great altar, the smiling priest in his robes of office, the happy faces of the men and women who stood around, and in the centre the little girl, all unconscious of the great part she was to play in the world's history, unconscious even of the sacredness of the place, bowing, smiling, and dancing, as little children like to do.

No wonder "all the house of Israel loved her." No wonder the priest saw nothing wrong in the innocent child dancing on the steps of the altar. And it is no wonder that through the centuries this sweet story has been told of her. She is worshiped by millions of people as the Mother of God and the Queen of Heaven. She is pictured by the artists as the sorrowing mother. But at this glad Christmas time, while we are celebrating the birth of her son Jesus, it is pleasant to recall that she, too, was once a little child, and that she pleased "all the house of Israel" when, standing on the third step of the altar, "she danced with her feet."

A Correction.

In *The Beacon* for November 26th we presented to our readers a picture of the statue to Deacon Samuel Chapin, which is located in Springfield, Mass., under the title of "The Puritan," accompanied by the name of "MacMonnies" as the artist. We were not correctly informed in this matter and now wish to state that the statue was the work of the late Augustus St. Gaudens.

If instead of a gem, or even of a flower, we could cast the gift of a lovely thought into the heart of a friend, that would be giving as the angels, I suppose, must give.

GEORGE MACDONALD.

RECREATION CORNER.**UNITARIAN SUNDAY SCHOOL SOCIETY:**

Editor Recreation Corner,—I am a boy six years of age and I enjoy *The Beacon* and the Recreation Corner very much. I am sending two original puzzles, but my mother has copied them off and is writing this for me because I cannot write as plain as I want to.

Yours truly,

LAWRENCE KENNISON.

ENIGMA XXII.

I am composed of 9 letters.
My 5, 8, 7, is a boy's name.
My 3, 4, 1, 2, is not poor.
My 9, 6, is an abbreviation.
My whole is a holiday we all love.

LAWRENCE KENNISON.

ENIGMA XXIII.

I am composed of 25 letters.
My 25, 2, 17, is not old.
My 17, 3, 11, 5, 10, is a liquid.
My 24, 9, 21, is what we do at meals.
My 22, 7, 8, is single.
My 13, 6, 14, 16, is not bad.
My 1, 24, 9, 4, 12, is a fruit.
My 23, 18, 19, 20, is a factory.
My 11, 15, 1, is a toy.
My whole is a saying at Christmas time.

GEORGE W. BROTHERS.

GEOGRAPHICAL PUZZLE.**IN TWO PARTS.****Part I.**

One mild day in early (*short street in Boston*), a party of eight boys and girls decided to take a tramp in the woods. One of the girls, (*city in Georgia*), was dressed in (*mountains of Vermont*); her sister (*city in Australia*) wore a (*mountains in New Hampshire*) sweater; (*small town in Western Massachusetts*) wore a (*hills near Boston*) suit, and (*one of the Southern Coast States*) had a long (*sea named in Bible*) cloak. Of the boys, (*river in Scotland*), a Princeton Sophomore, wore a (*sea in Europe*) sweater with (*city in New Jersey*) letters; (*city in Australia*) and (*river in Massachusetts*) walked together, both dressed in dark (*river in Scotland*). (*Lake in New York*) was on the (*cape in North Carolina*) for hunting, and so carried a (*historic town in Virginia*), of which his sister (*city in Georgia*) had considerable (*cape in North Carolina*). "He hasn't let it out of his sight," she explained to the other girls, "since (*river in South Carolina*) brought it to him, and he expects to have many a (*small river near Cambridge, Eng.*), with it."

E. S. P.

ANSWERS TO PUZZLES IN NO. II.**ENIGMA XVIII.**—Amerigo Vespucci.**ENIGMA XIX.**—Niagara Falls.**CROSS-WORD ENIGMA.**—Merrimac.**ACROSTIC.**—(**T**ELE)GRAPH AND (**T**ELE)PHONE.

Words:
grip
rash
also
Penn
home.

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